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Environment Department to Hold Public Forums on Dust and Air Quality in Hobbs and Roswell

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will hold public air quality forums in Hobbs and Roswell next week to hear from the public on local dust issues. The events will be held as follows:

Hobbs: Tuesday, October 19, from 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Hobbs Public Library Meeting Room, 509 N. Shipp in Hobbs.

Roswell: Wednesday, October 20, from 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the New Mexico Environment Department Office, 1914 West 2nd Street in Roswell.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets federal health standards for dust, or particulate matter, in the air that we breathe. High concentrations of dust in the air can result in negative impacts to health and quality of life. Although some industrial sources are required to use dust control measures, no other dust regulations are yet in place throughout most of New Mexico.

NMED is interested in your opinions about whether or not an air quality regulation addressing dust sources in New Mexico is necessary or desired. A new dust regulation could apply to a variety of dust sources, including, but not limited to, construction activities, unpaved roads and parking lots, agricultural operations, and materials storage and handling.

If pursued, a new dust regulation could apply statewide throughout New Mexico, with the exceptions of Bernalillo County and Indian lands. (The Environment Department does not have jurisdiction for air quality in Bernalillo County or on Indian lands.)

At the forum, NMED will provide information about health risks associated with airborne dust and steps people can take to lower levels of dust in the air that we all breathe.

For more information, contact Andy Berger, Environmental Analyst with the Air Quality Bureau, at (505) 955-8034 or Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director at (505) 827-0314.

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